

Update on the State Council's SB 1270 Report to the Governor and Legislature

Introduction

On May 1, 2007 the State Council presented to the Governor and the Legislature a report on ways to expand opportunities and choice in California's day program services for individuals with developmental disabilities. This report was required by the Legislature through the passage of SB 1270. The report and recommendations have been well received by people with disabilities, families, advocates, service providers, regional centers, and state agencies. However, the work to make the recommendations produce positive outcomes for people with disabilities has just begun. This brief report covers an update on that work.

Process

The State Council brought together a diverse group of more than 110 stakeholders from across the State. These individuals worked more than 2,700 hours across three months to create a vision of the future and strategies on how to get there. Those ideas were reviewed, and revised in more than 39 local grass roots meetings with an additional 300 participants. Another 325 people participated in a California Disability Community Action Network Townhall Telemeeting. At each statewide meeting, individuals with developmental disabilities played a major role. A meeting was held the day before to support individuals in understanding the agenda and preparing their input. The information developed for these meetings was also used in the general community meetings conducted by Area Boards and Regional Centers. Finally, the State Council and Area Boards posted an online survey which provided about 100 responses.

Core Values

On January 9th 2007, the stakeholder workgroup created the following core values which are reflected in the final recommendations:

- **Choice.** Individuals choose how they want to participate in their community and those who want to work, have a job they choose.
- **Flexibility.** There is a system of support for individuals who want to participate in their communities and who want to work.
- **Benefits.** Individuals understand their employment and health benefits.
- **Innovation.** Good ideas are rewarded and shared.
- **Training and Education.** People who are paid for their support are well trained and make a living wage with benefits.
- **Community Education and Outreach.** Communities understand that people with developmental disabilities are good friends, neighbors, citizens, and fellow workers.

Senate Bill 1270

The Legislature requested the Council to provide recommendations by May 1, 2007, that support the following goals:

- 1) Expand peoples' opportunities in social, recreational and volunteer activities.
- 2) Expand work opportunities in the community.
- 3) Help make government jobs more open to people with disabilities.
- 4) Increase the use of creative ideas like vouchers, and self-directed services.
- 5) Look at successful models in California and other states.
- 6) Find ways to help make things work better by making some changes to regulations and funding.

Update on SB 1270 Recommendations

Goal 1. By July 1st 2008, opportunities for integrated employment and community participation are discussed at all Individual Program Plan (IPP) meetings.

Recommendation #1

Make sure people with developmental disabilities and families get information about integrated employment, community participation, work, and health benefits at their IPP meeting.

Update:

- Initiated discussions with the Legislature about adding language to the Lanterman Act to strengthen the IPP process. Suggestions include language that outlines discussions by the IPP team about employment options, community participation, benefits, and transition (as needed).
- Meeting with World Institute on Disability (WID) to consider developing legislation to pilot a phase-in of benefits counselors as regional center staff members.
- Working with WID to develop ways to market the free, online Disability Benefits 101 Calculator to individuals with developmental disabilities, families, and support teams.

Recommendation #2

People have their own self-directed service budgets, decide on the kinds of services they want, and buy their services.

Update:

- Met with the Department of Developmental Services to collaborate on the implementation of the Self-Directed Services Waiver now set for roll-out in 2008.
- Area Boards continue to work with the Self-Determination pilots to help bring continuity to the statewide waiver transition.

Goal 2. By July 1st 2008, there is a Cooperative Transition and Employment Unit located in the Department of Developmental Services (DDS).

Recommendation #3

The State Council will ask state agencies like DDS, Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) and the Department of Education (DOE) to put funding together to help people with developmental disabilities and their families figure out what to do after high school.

Update:

- Since the New Day Conference and the SB 1270 report, several Area Boards and Regional Centers have developed a local transition task force to work on the challenging issues faced by individuals and their families as they move from school to the realities of adult living and working.
- The Council has met with the California Consortium for Postsecondary Education Opportunities for People with Developmental Disabilities to discuss strategies for expanding access to postsecondary education and training.

Goal 3. By July 1st 2008, The State Council will announce a 5 year employment initiative for Californians with developmental disabilities.

Recommendation #4

The State Council will work with its State Public Agency partners and all employers to hire more people with disabilities.

Update:

- Met with the Governor's Committee on Employment for People with Disabilities (Governor's Committee) to discuss collaborative strategies.
- The Council will participate in activities that highlight transition and career development as part of National Disability Employment Awareness Month in October.
- Hiring individuals with disabilities has become a priority for the Council in filling current available positions.
- Discussions with the Governor's Office on supporting efforts to hold a public/private sector roundtable on employment for people with disabilities in the Spring of 2008.

Recommendation #5

Help individuals who have good ideas about work/job services or community services and people with developmental disabilities who want to start their own business.

Update:

- Supported presentation by individuals in self-employment to Partners in Policy Making training.
- Participating in J. Nolan conference on self-employment; focused on strategies for service providers who support individuals who are self-employed.
- Met with the California Association for Microenterprise Opportunity to collaborate on strategies for promoting self-employment for people with disabilities.
- The Council is developing strategies to support self-employment opportunities statewide.

Recommendation #6

Make sure support staff get the training they need to do a good job by putting together good trainers from across the state.

Update:

- Financial support for the online College of Direct Support currently operated by the Arc of California.
- Following current legislation written to develop a training pilot program to improve the use of recognized training resources for direct support workers.
- The Council is exploring opportunities to include individuals with developmental disabilities and family members in training that focuses on innovative services.

Get the word out about people with developmental disabilities who work and are involved in their communities.

Recommendation #7

Update:

- Met with California Health Incentives Improvement Project (CHIIP) and the Governor's Committee to coordinate efforts to produce and disseminate statewide media.
- Collaborating with PRIDE Industries, CHIIP, and the Governor's Committee to cosponsor media events in conjunction with National Disability Awareness Month (for example, a reception to highlight the abilities of people with disabilities).
- Working with SB 1270 Consumer Advisory Group on additional media production.
- The SB 1270 DVD has been shown throughout the State; the Council is considering a strategy for distribution for airing on local cable stations.
- The Council and Area Boards continue to produce an e-letter that contains media information about people with developmental disabilities.

Recommendation #8

For people who work and get Supplemental Security Income (SSI), let them keep more of the money they earn and health benefits.

Update:

- After initial discussions with WID and other organizational partners, the Council will be initiating a forum to discuss the possibility of developing a statewide waiver.

Recommendation #9

Let Regional Centers pay for services that help people find and keep jobs and get out in the community to do things like everyone else.

Update:

- The Council has initiated discussions the California Rehabilitation Association on strategies to expand integrated work opportunities.
- Met with San Diego transportation advocates to discuss statewide strategies for expanding accessible transit.

Goal 4. By July 1st 2008, there is a statewide system for collecting and reporting information about integrated employment and community participation.

Recommendation #10

Keep track of the work/employment situation of people with developmental disabilities and how they are involved in social and recreational activities in their communities.

Update:

- Working with the Department of Developmental Services and other state agency partners (for example, the Department of Rehabilitation, Employment Development Department, Governor's Committee) on options for gathering statewide data on employment and community participation.
- The Council has become a member of a statewide coalition of agencies working with the State Employment Leadership Network (SELN is a national technical assistance network) to develop ways to track employment, and social/recreation opportunities statewide.

Legislative Proposals

Next Steps

- The Council presented the SB 1270 Report at a recent roundtable meeting regarding an update of the Lanterman Act. The meeting was hosted by Assemblyman Jim Beall, Chair of the Human Services Committee. The purpose of the update is to focus on adding language to the Act that more fully supports choice in community employment, social and recreation opportunities.
- In November, the Council will testify at a hearing of the Assembly Human Services Committee on legislative proposals related to the SB 1270 Report.

Innovation in California

The Legislature required the Council to look at innovative nonresidential services and supports in California. What we found were a number of examples of innovation in choice and self-direction, employment, social and recreation activities, and transportation. All of these innovations have been created using the current system of vendorization, laws, and regulation. Here are some samples from the report and there are certainly dozens more as well.

Arc's Inclusive Senior Services

In 2006, the Arc of Southeast Los Angeles County developed a new service option for active seniors who want to retire from day, workshop or employment services. It's open to seniors 50 years or older who want to participate in existing senior options in local communities. While attendance is not required, it's higher than many other programs. A monthly calendar outlines activities, locations and costs associated with events.

Redwood City Parks and Recreation

In 2005, the Redwood City received a grant from the State Council to launch a Community Inclusion Initiative Plan. A countywide Recreation Service Guide provides a one-stop shop reference to recreation services specifically for people with disabilities. The initiative includes training for recreation leaders to assist with inclusion practices. It includes a mentorship program that pairs local community members to individuals with special needs in mainstream recreation programs.

Taft College

The Transition to Independent Living Program is a post-secondary experience for adults with developmental disabilities emphasizing learning independent living skills. Students participate in the live-in program an average of 22 months. Staff works with each student to establish realistic long-range and short-range goals. Instruction is offered in the following areas: meal preparation, money management, shopping, housekeeping, use of appliances, safety, communication, transportation, personal care, and interpersonal relationships.

Micro-Enterprise Development Project

With a State Council grant, the project will support at least 25 individuals with developmental disabilities to start their own small businesses (micro enterprises). It will also create a cadre of six provider organizations to develop the capacity to assist these individuals and others to start and maintain their own small businesses. The six provider agencies are: Jay Nolan Community Services, Arc Ventura County, Alpha Resource Center, People Creating Success, Inc., Work Training Program and Easter Seals (TCRC area).

Acknowledgments

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I would like to work independently on my own and not have a contract hold me back from working at the company I was trained at and get paid equal. Pay with benefits and medical benefits as well and to clock in and out independently and to be equal as one.

**SB 1270 Consumer Advisory
Committee Member**

Special thanks to Sasha Bittner and Marcy Good for their leadership and determination. Finally, to Mark Starford and Charlene Jones for their unending support of the Advisory Committee.